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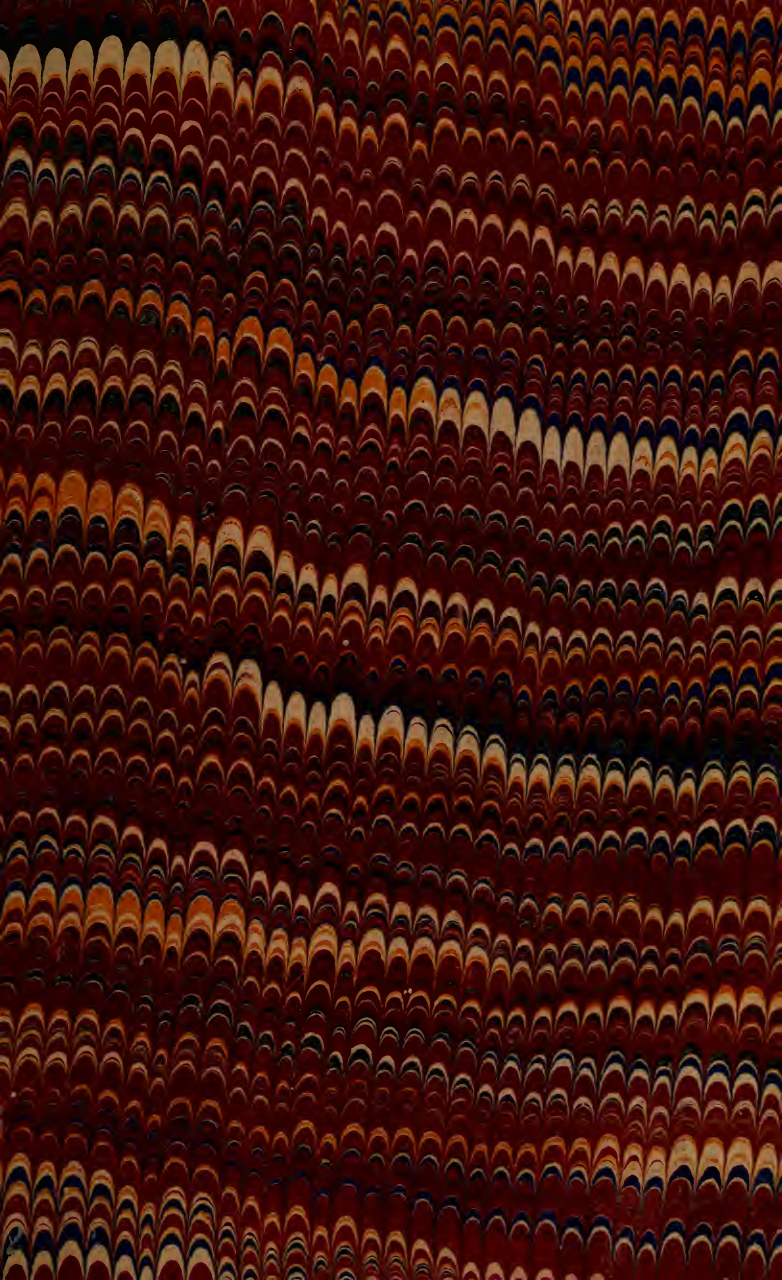
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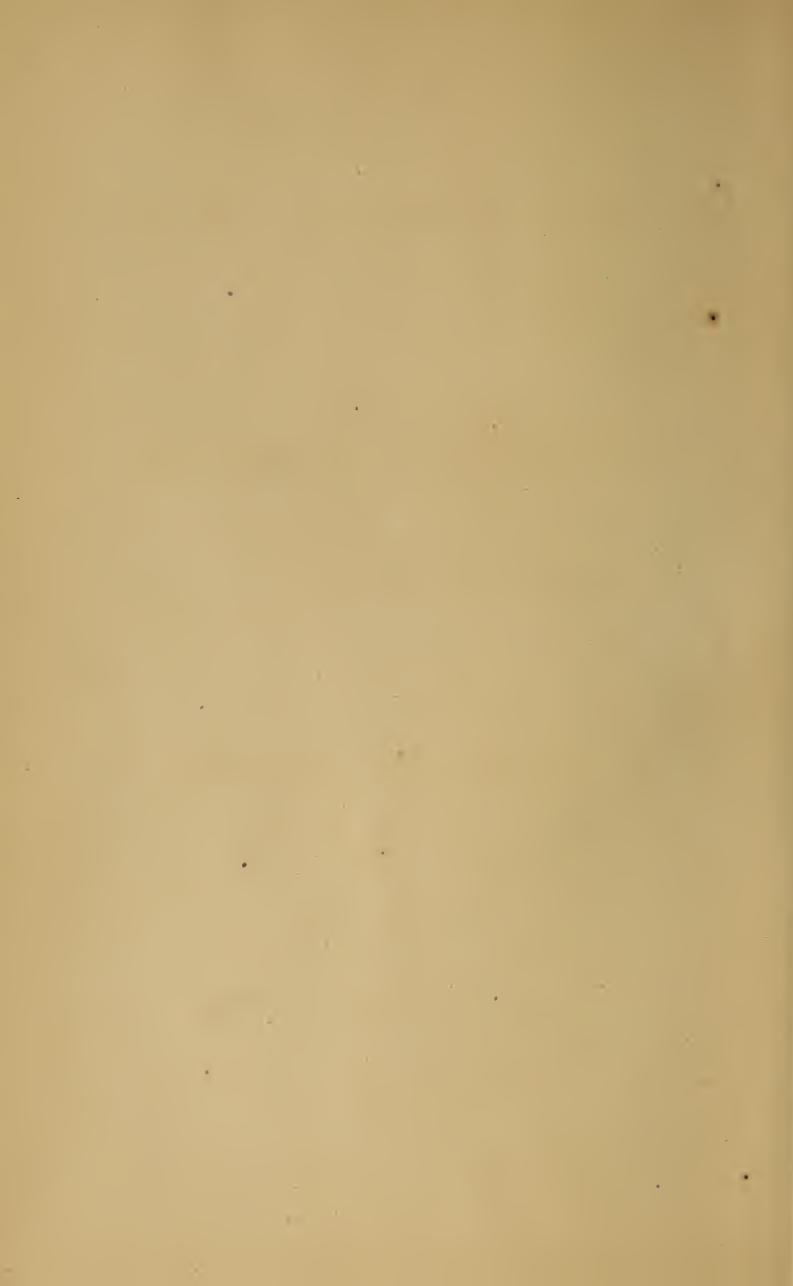
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ST. KATTARINE'S SPIRE,

OR

THE DEVIL AT WORK

IN THE CHURCH.



A RITUALISTIC MELODY,

IN FOUR PARTS.

NEW YORK:

R. C. ROOT, ANTHONY & Co., Publishers and Printers,

62 Liberty Street.

1872.

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In the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and seventy-two.

ADVERTISEMENT.

There was no little stir in Katskill consequent upon a public reading in that excitable community, by the author, of his poem of St. Kattarine's Spire. Several churches thought they saw themselves reflected in the melody, and a number of prominent individuals went raving mad at the supposed caricature of themselves in it. A writer in the Katskill Kronicle called the author all sorts of hard names, and in fact, told him, in so many words, he was no better than he should be. The author resented the charge as mildly as possible, but it was no use, Katskill became too warm for him, and he had to vacate the premises.

It is hoped that not many ecclesiastical bodies elsewhere, will be so sensitive as to appropriate to themselves in particular, what

was only intended as a whimsical sort of satire upon a few of the vices and follies which the author from his stand=point has seen creeping into the church at large, threatening serious disturbances if suffered to go on unchecked. The shafts of ridicule sometimes penetrate deeper, and do more effectual service than the most labored arguments from the pulpit. Should such, in a measure, be the effect of St. Kattarine's Spire, the author will be abundantly compensated for his treatment at the hands of the Kats=killians, and can smile complacently at the discharge of any amount of epithets from the high=church blunderbuss, such as were leveled at him through the columns of the Kats=kill Kronicle.

BROOKLYN, May, 1872.

SYNOPSIS OF THE MELODY.

PART FIRST :

THE WORK BEGUN—ASPIRING.

PART SECOND :

THE WORKING CIRCLE—CONSPIRING.

PART THIRD :

THE WORK UNDERGROUND—INSPIRING.

PART FOURTH :

THE WORK COMPLETED—SUSPIRING.

ST. KATTARINE'S SPIRE.

PART FIRST.

THE CHURCH of St. Katt'rine, St. Kitts, or St. Kitty,
Whichever you please, or as pleases my ditty ;
Indeed, you will find it quite frequently written,
In euphonous parlance, the Church of St. Kitten,
And sometimes by those who affect Dr. Pusey,
The Church of St. Puss, Pussy Kat, or St. Pussy ;
So, changing the name as the rhythm may need,
Or the rhyme, or the reason, the Poem will proceed.

The Church of St. Kattarine wanted a spire,
Or, rather, it wanted the old one made higher ;
For the Church of St. Katt'rine was getting ambitious,
Which thing in a church is, at least, say suspicious ;

St. Kattarine's Spire.

St. Katt'rine, in fine, was fast losing her normal
Condition, and getting to be, in fact, formal—
She wanted to keep up with the times, and her mystic
Arrangements inclined to the ritualistic ;
She'd an altar, and candles, and chanting processions,
Intoning, and bowing, and cloister confessions ;
She had rigmarole relics, and vespers, and masses,
Madonnas, and dogmas, and mythical passes
By which a good churchman can do as he pleases,
And get absolution when sinning increases ;
In fact she had all a strict churchman requires,
Or what the most formal high preacher desires,
Except, as I said, that she wanted her steeple
Made higher a story or two than the people !
Had she thought of the story that Esther has told,
How that Agagite sneak was so handsomely sold—
How the foolish old heathen, tho' rolling in wealth,
And honors, and titles, enough for his health,
Must needs go a moping, and teasing his wife,
As if 'twas the greatest concern of his life,

St. Kattarine's Spire.

Because that poor Mordecai, down in the dumps,
Refused to rise up with some monkey-like jumps,
And make him a bow a la ritualistic,
As he rode the King's gate thro', with pomp pugilistic—
How he went, in the gloom of his soul, on the sly,
And put up a scaffold so grand, and so high,
That no high-church steeple would ever disgrace it !—
Had she thought of all this, and have heeded it too,
As all real good churches should certainly do—
She would likely have thought of the hangman's *hic jacet*.
Ah, little she knew, the good Church, what she lost
In her ritual spirt, by not counting the cost ;
Ah, little she knew what good muffins she missed,
By sending her corn to the ritual grist ;
Ah, little she knew that her papacy notions,
To true faith and love, were as drops to great oceans ;
Ah, little she knew as she journeyed to Rome,
What a storehouse of hope she was leaving at home ;
Ah, little she knew that a groat for a guinea,
Was all she would get when she kissed her aunt Jennie !

St. Kattarine's Spire.

But this is degressing : I said that St. Kitts,
While writhing in one of these ritual fits,
That fasten themselves on the militant churches,
And hold them so tight in their maniac clutches,—
As hideous vipers will charm a poor bird
To its death, altho' hate was the feeling first stirred ;
Or as Vice, says the poet, that often is faced,
Is endured, and then pitied, and lastly embraced—
So the St. Kitten saints, having fallen in love
With the ritual monster, as noted above,
Had resolved to advance a step further, and show
On the outside a sign of the feeling below ;
Had resolved, in a word, to erect such a spire,
As all the world round it must pause to admire—
A spire so straight, and so sharp, and so high,
'Twould seem in its aim to be piercing the sky,
And boring a hole for the good souls below
Not furnished with pinions to scramble up thro' !
But the Devil was 'round, and he laughed in his sleeve
To see how these people were making believe—

St. Kattarine's Spire.

Deceiving themselves with a notion so frantic—
The natural fruit of a ritual antic :—
As if a tall spire at all could be needful
To make such good churchmen of heaven more heedful—
As if in erecting this wonderful spire,
The saints of St. Kitten to heaven drew nigher—
As if, in a word, these good people were able
To do what had failed at the tower of Babel !
But the Devil was cunning, and hid his hoof cloven,
As far out of sight as if down in his oven ;
And so the good Pastor convoked his dear people
To plan and devise how to put up the steeple—
For the Pastor was politic—shy of offending—
Because the good soul always good was intending ;
He would yield to the Toms, and the Tabbys beside,
And so unto all was an excellent guide ;
His grasp was so warm, and his smile so potential,
His words and his actions so quite deferential,
That ev'ry old Kat of the masculine gender
Believed that his Pastor to him would surrender ;

St. Kattarine's Spire.

While they of the opposite sex were all smitten
With one so regardful of ev'ry young Kitten ;
By name he was Japheth, and Japheth by nature—
Unlike his great prototype only in feature ;
He covered all sins with the mantle of love,
A serpent in wisdom, yet mild as a dove :
Thus leading his flock by the nose, the good Pastor
Was able to keep it from serious disaster ;
He led it along thro' the flowery mead,
Where by the still waves it could quietly feed ;
It neither fell into the slough of despond,
Nor feared for the monster that loomed up beyond—
That ritual monster, disguised with such skill,
It seemed like an angel of light on the hill !
By skillfully using his politic prism,
He kept in the shade diabolical schism,
And casting the rays of his spectrum aright,
Spread over St. Kitten an uniform light ;
And so, falling in with the tide towards the steeple,
I say it again, he convoked his dear people.

St. Kattarine's Spire.

Such a meeting of mousers there never was seen,
And never will be till the moon blushes green ;
Grimalkins and Tabbys so crowded the floor,
There scarcely was room for a single Kat more ;
A very brief service—a chant and a mumble—
A sort of a broad-church and ritual jumble—
When the Rector, disrobing, the chancel ascended,
And called for the views of his flock, as intended ;
Some proposed one thing, and others another,
But raising the wind seemed the principal bother ;
For you can't raise a steeple on high church or low,
Without the essential of money, you know ;
And that you can't raise without raising the devil,
No matter how cautious you are, or how civil :—
The vestry palavered, the wardens descanted,
'Twas only ten thousand or so that was wanted ;
Send round the plate, said one, test the condition—
Charity begins at home—*this* is our mission !
How about the heathen Chinees, and the Jews,
Said another, and they in the slums and the slues,

St. Kattarine's Spire.

The *poor* at our doors, and poor Jack on the seas,
The sick and imprisoned ones, must we leave these !
And they, cried a third, who are seeking to live
In the land of the red man, may we not give
To them in the West, and the poor Indian too,
And the Freedmen down South, pray what will *they* do ?
And Afric's dark daughters, must they go to—say
What you will there was really the devil to pay !
For the Saints in their ardor were waxing censorious,
Or what the world's people describe as uproarious ;
And there's no telling whereto 'twould have tended,
Nor how soon the meeting in tumult have ended,
Had not the good Pastor, with politic speech,
And blandest of smiles, his conclusions to reach,
Said, waving his hand to the angry opponents,
I see that we need here our gentle exponents,
And therefore I move, by your leave, to refer
The subject to them without further demur.

St. Kattarine's Spire.

Like oil on the waters that tumble with fury,
Or speech of the judge to an obdurate jury ;
Or like when the ocean-tossed mariner catches
The first gleam of day thro' a chink in the hatches ;
Or best like as when a wise General flanks,
By a masterly movement, the enemy's ranks—
'Twas said, and the bitter discussion was crushed,
And all, in a moment, to silence were hushed ;
'Twas said, when the Sisterhood all in a fluster,
Began round the chancel in circles to cluster :
'Twas something so new in the St. Kitten annals—
Its squabbles had flowed in such far diff'rent channels,
'Twas not to be wondered it stirred up a strife
That might perhaps end in destruction of life ;
So the angry Grimalkins, so quick to unsheath,
Knocked under at once with a slight show of teeth ;
And when the good Pastor had yielded the chair,
They quietly moved to the pews in the rear.

St. Kattarine's Spire.

As flies to molasses, or bees to the clover,
The gentle crowd gathered to talk the thing over—
For talking, you know, is the gift of the sex,
How simple so'er, or however complex ;
But why this is so has been never decided,
And never will be till the world is divided ;
It seems a provision kind nature has made,
Since Adam first delved in the earth for his bread,
In order that *man* should enjoy all the working,
While *woman* endures, as she best can, the talking !
A woman can't *argue*, she springs with a bound
To sagest conclusions that wise men confound
By long prying into, and windy discussion,
And many hard knocks in a mental concussion ;
O give me a woman's clear-headed, sharp vision,
And go to the dogs with your wise men's decision ;
A woman will get at the root of a matter,
While judges and juries are making a clatter ;
She'll see thro' a millstone, or into the middle—
Forever a paradox, wonder, and riddle !

St. Kattarine's Spire.

But this, you perceive, is another digression,
Which I make as a masculine mouser's confession,
And back to my story return very humble,
Prepared to proceed with the feminine mumble.

The Sisters, I said, as the Pastor had moved,
And as the male mousers had jointly approved,
Assembled together, and forthwith resolved
That they from aught else would be henceforth absolved
Until Kitty's spire was up, and they'd do it,
In spite of the Toms ! Quoth the Devil, I knew it !
Only let the sex say that a thing shall be done,
And one half the battle is already won !

(The Devil had learned this long since in the garden,
And hence his vain boast we may readily pardon ;)
So the masculine mousers withdrew with their mittens,
And left the whole thing to the feminine Kittens ;
While the wag of the Parish, one Sandy Macalpin—
A big-whiskered, broad-shouldered, noisy Grimalkin,

St. Kattarine's Spire.

Who ne'er missed a chance to get off a bad joke,
Roared out with irrev'rence, your fire's all smoke !
And when the male mousers had passed out the door,
Looking back at the Sisterhood crowding the floor,
And giving the Rector a nudge very sly,
He exclaimed, my dear Pastor, O how's this for *high* !

But the feminine Kittens, like sensible elves,
At once set to work to embody themselves
Into what at conventions and clubs you would call,
In Parliament phrase, The Committee of All ;
Which means, as I take it, that each single soul
Of the club or convention, as one of the whole,
Has its rights and responsible duties alike,
And of course, as free agent, to bluster and strike
As the whim or occasion may seem to inspire,
Or as the said agent may seem to desire ;
So the Devil, aware of his *own* little failing,
Sat quietly down by the low chancel railing.

St. Kattarine's Spire.

The Rector's good Spouse, the best mouser of all,
Like the coveted spire, sharp-pointed and tall,
With a thing on her head like a very new crown,
Or a very old tile, or a churn upside down,
As much like a hat of the masculine mould,
As ever was seen, or has ever been sold ;
And on her fair shoulders so gently reposing,
A cast-iron garment, immensely imposing—
Like a self-imposed yoke on the shoulders of youth,
And feminine loveliness, virtue, and truth :—
'Tis said 'twas the skin of a renegade tiger,
The gift of a Prince on the banks of the Niger—
A very *dark* Prince, a fat nigger in fact,
To whom the good mouser had once sent a tract !

But leaving the view of these outside forlornments,
I hasten to glance at her inside adornments ;
And here my Muse fails me, the task is too great,
She never could rise with such ponderous weight ;

St. Kattarine's Spire.

So down to the earth falleth flat the dear minion,
With a crook in her back, and a kink in her pinion !

This excellent mouser, for planning so noted,
With pious persuasion, as hereafter quoted,
And gifted with talents executive rare,
For squaring a circle, or circling a square ;
With the still higher gift of the tongue, it was said,
Which found best expression at morning in bed,
So that Japheth, the ablest and boldest of preachers,
Became, by her lectures, the meekest of creatures ;
In a word, this good mouser, at that day uncommon,
Was what would be *now* called, a *strong-minded woman* !
If Japheth but dared for a moment to glance
On the first Warden's spouse, as he saw her advance,
And smiled as they met, with the quickest dispatch,
The old Kat would mouse it, and give him a scratch !
(I mean this, of course, in a sense metaphorical,
And not as an absolute scratch categorical!—)

St. Kattarine's Spire.

That would cause him to hang down his head like a culprit,
A dog of a Kat, as he crept up the pulpit ;
For he knew that those basilisk eyes were upon him,
And followed his own round the Church, *magnum bonum*.
(I trust I'm excused for the Latin quotation,
But finding the words in my new annotation,
And seeming exactly the subject to fit,
I venture to use them as proof of my wit.)
A wife that is jealous and pretty beside,
A good-natured husband may learn to abide,
But when a hard face joins with jealous exacting,
The feelings that move him are simply distracting,
And soon he will learn, not his wife to *despise*,
But to wish her an angel far up in the skies !

This wonderful mouser, aware of her mission,
Began thus at once to define her position—
Now Sisters, she said, as she screwed up her face,
Let us say nothing here would reflect a disgrace

St. Kattarine's Spire.

On St. Kitty's Church, or the end we've in view,
Or the ways, or the means, or whatever we do ;
Indeed, on reflection, I beg to suggest
That leaving the talking to me would be best ;
You've only to listen with quiet content,
And give the proceedings your ready assent.
(While the Devil ensconced by the low chancel railing,
Intoned to himself with a very low wailing,
The burden of which seemed to be his poor head
Was muddled and fuddled by what she had said ;
What follows she uttered with all due reflection,
Thus giving the Devil his due for detection.)
'Tis said, she began, I have talents most rare
For leading a meeting, or running a Fair ;
'Tis *said* I've these talents, I modestly move it,
If such *is* the fact, that this meeting approve it ;
So please all keep silence, and hear with attention,
The project of which I propose to make mention—
A project, she said, smiling grim, you'll admit
Will fill up the coffers of darling St. Kitt ;

St. Kattarine's Spire.

And then growing warm as she counted the chance,
And saw, as it were, in a vision or trance,
That beautiful structure rise higher and higher,
'Till she in her posture outrivalled the spire,
She exclaimed, Kitty's Steeple must rise, that is *flat* !
O no ! screamed an elderly Kitten, not *that* !
I move that the steeple be *round* ! Cried a third,
I move it be *square* ! Squalled a fourth, who'er heard
Of such nonsense ! Fie, fie ! cried the chair,
Do'nt squabble so, Sisters ! be it *flat*, *round*, or *square*,
That is not the point ; the point is the Fair,
Or rather the Fair is the point of the spire,
Indeed I may say 'tis the steeple entire ;
On the subject of style I can give no instruction,
That matter belongs to The Board of Construction ;
Our duty is simply the money to raise
By means of a Fair, in the fairest of ways ;
So now The Committee of All must begin
To get at the means. Dear, dear, what a din !

St. Kattarine's Spire.

Do, Sisters, be quiet, remember the place,
And do'nt bring upon us this lasting disgrace,
That we, as good Sisters, exalted and moral,
Should descend without cause to this feminine quarrel;
That we whom the churches hold up as bright patterns,
Should let ourselves down to a level with slatterns ;
That we, whom your Pastor looks to for example,
Should under our feet all his sweet counsel trample !
To us it belongs, as I just now suggested,
And as your dear Pastor, you know, has requested,
To show to the world we are not in the lurch,
When called to perform Woman's work in the Church !
(While the Devil he laughed in his sleeve by the railing,
Still humming and thumming that monotone wailing ;
And then as the gabble grew fast and more furious,
The wink that he gave was exceedingly curious ;)
O Sisters, she cried, I am shocked, I'm dismayed,
That here in the Church such a rumpus you've made.

St. Kattarine's Spire.

She ended, and jerking the tail of her gown,
The managing mouser in silence sat down ;
While much the same way the male mousers had acted,
When lately their Pastor's reproof they extracted,
The feminine Kittens, ashamed of their splutter,
Closed up their sweet mouths full of unmelted butter ;
And this closed the meeting, the confab was ended,
And all further action at present suspended,
For darkness was settling around, and the fire
Was out in the furnace, if not in the spire ;
While the beautiful face of St. Kitt's patron saint,
That hung in the chancel regardless of paint,
With an *Ora pro nobis* inscribed on the frame,
And an *Ave Maria*, in letters of flame ;
And the Creed, and the Prayer, and the words of the Law,
Without spot or blemish, or any big flaw ;
And the high vaulted ceiling, uncommonly vast,
Were fading away like the things of the past ;
While the oriol window, so bright and so high,
Looked down thro' the thick-coming gloom like an Eye !

St. Kattarine's Spire.

So the feminine Kittens, like penitent sinners,
Went home to their mates, and their six o'clock dinners ;
That cast-iron yoke, as it moved with a flirt,
Being last, tho' not least, the dear church to desert,
While Jocko, the Sexton, locked up the Sacristy,
And he and the Devil went out very frisky !



ST. KATTARINE'S SPIRE.

PART SECOND.

THE CHURCH of St. Katt'rine was now all ablaze,
At least in a fiction, the steeple to raise ;
Perhaps I should say that the Church was on fire,
To raise, in a fiction, the wonderful Spire ;
Or, better than all, that the feminine members
Were burning with ardor, to ashes and embers,
To put up the Steeple on darling St. Kitten,
With which, to a Tabby, they all had been smitten,
In spite of what Sandy Macalpin had said,
Or what in the papers no doubt they had read ;
For down in his oven the Devil sat praising
And fanning the flame the fair Sisters were raising ;

St. Kattarine's Spire.

It extended all round in a circle as wide
As the Parish itself, and boldly defied
All the efforts the Pastor had quietly made
To smother it up with his politic spade ;
In a word it included the whole congregation,
And threatened a general Church conflagration ;
Why even the dear little Kitts in their plays,
Had caught the infection a spire to raise,
And built on the sidewalk, in sight of the people,
A miniature church with its miniature steeple :
Of course it was hard for the masculine mousers,
Who felt themselves rapidly losing their trousers,
To stand out against such a pressure as that,
And so they fell into the whim to a Kat ;
There was no use, they said, under such new conditions,
To bother themselves about *other* home missions,
And as for the foreign ones, bless you, my dear,
'Twas out of the question, at least for a year ;
For the feminine mousers had made up their minds,
So many in number, and many in kinds,

St. Kattarine's Spire.

That their mates as wise statesmen, and not as mad fools,
Said, go it, my darlings, majority rules !

But here I must pause, with reluctance, to tell
How the feminine mousers, in mousing so well—
How The Committee of All in its rush after plunder,
Came near to committing a serious blunder ;
For they in committing themselves and their houses,
Of course, as it follows, committed their spouses ;
The right of a mouser *herself* to commit,
Is a question so simple that all will admit,
But when she presumes on the right she has earned,
Her spouse to include, then the tables are turned ;
And this brings to view the whole question in brief,
That is vexing the world for a speedy relief ;—
Woman's rights, say what are they, ay, there is the rub,
Yes there's where Time's wheel turns so rough on the hub !
The right of a woman, when men are asleep,
To wake and to watch, and in sorrow to weep ;

St. Kattarine's Spire.

The right to bring comfort to those in distress,
To soothe and to raise, and the fainting to bless ;
The right the lone heart-broken widow to cheer,
And to dry with her presence the sad orphan's tear ;
The right to bring food and warm clothes to the poor,
And never to turn a poor wretch from the door ;
The right when the holiday friends have all flown,
And left the poor suffering sick one alone—
The right to kneel down by the dying one's side,
And point up to Him who for all such hath died ;
The right, her *own* right, homes happy to make,
In all the wide world for her dear Master's sake ;
O, rights such as these are, dear woman may crave
Until she resigns all her rights to the grave !
Then away with the talk that is filling the air,
That woman has rights in the van to appear—
To unsex herself, and to covet the gaze
Of the rude and unfeeling in all sorts of ways—
To stand boldly forth with her uncovered head,
And court the applause of the vicious and bad—

St. Kattarine's Spire.

To brave the great multitude gaping in wonder
That glorious woman should make such a blunder—
To enter the whirl of the mart, and to call it
Her *right* to express herself out in the ballot !
Away then, I say, with such folly and sin,
That'll end in the ruin of women and men !

But this is the longest digression yet made,
And may be skipped over, or rapidly read ;
For the story has suffered while I have been racing
Away with my Muse such a wild Phantom chasing.

To return : The Committee of All had so hindered—
Were all, to a Tabby, so evenly minded—
They were aiming so high at that elegant Spire,
They almost forgot they had else to acquire ;
They forgot that their consorts had something to say,
That fathers and brothers would all have to pay—

St. Kattarine's Spire.

That nine-tenths the money they voted to give,
Must come, *if* it comes, from the masculine hive ;
They had almost forgotten, so deeply intent
Were they on the main chance, to obtain this consent ;
And therefore, I say, a mistake was committed,
Which nearly upset the whole question submitted :—
No matter the masculine mousers again
Cried ditto to Burk, and let dear Tabby reign !
So to work went the Sisters, with needles and pins—
The heavy artillery that Fair battle wins—
To crochet and cross-stitch, embroider and knit,
All the way from the cross to the crown of St. Kitt :
There were circles on circles of old Kats and young,
The banner of stitch-away ev'rywhere flung
To the breeze, waved joy at the prospect ahead—
At what there was doing, and what there was said :—
Such sweet little morsels of scandal were twisted
In lace-work and worsted, and handsomely listed
On cushions and door mats, and artfully woven
In slippers and tidies right hot from the oven,

St. Kattarine's Spire.

Astonished the Devil himself, as he wandered
From circle to circle, and pensively pondered
On what the dear Kittens were saying and doing,
And what a big stomach they had for the stewing !

Of all the big Circles encircling St. Kitts,
And weaving their webs in such nice little bits
For the Fair which the Church was about to espouse,
Was that which now circled the Rector's own house,
Under charge and control of its managing matron,
Head-centre and mover, and principal patron :
'Twas the last of the circles, indeed, for the day
Of the Fair was at hand, and the Kats mus'nt play ;
Macalpin was there with his jokes and his jeers,
And poking his fun at the sweet little dears,
And the novelties cooking for catching the people
In dear little nets for completing the Steeple ;
But Sandy was liked by the Saints for all that—
Indeed I may say was the favorite Kat,

St. Kattarine's Spire.

And the only male Kat in the whole congregation
That didn't believe in the high-church salvation ;
He laughed at the sham of the choral procession,
And dared them to prove Apostolic succession ;
Their relics, he said, were a humbug and cheat,
And closet confessions the Devil's dead-beat !
And Pauline was there, the poetic Kitten,
Who more than all others with Sandy was smitten :
And there was Erasmus the Greek, with his class
Of young Kittens ; he was there to haráss
Them with questions, and pose each young head
With Athens and Corinth, and churches stone-dead ;
Erasmus the Greek was as ugly as sin—
The ugliest Tom Kat that ever was seen,
With a mouth like a toad, or a nut-cracker toy,
The right sort of mouth the dead tongues to enjoy :
And there, like that fabulous monster, the Gnome,
Stalked Nathan the Prophet, a convert from Rome,
By profession a baker, and dealer in whole—
Sale of bread for the body as well as the soul ;

St. Kattarine's Spire.

His muffins were light, but his bread was much lighter,
His oven was tight, but his dealings were tighter ;
He was good in his line, and in good saleratus,
And his motto was short—*nunquam non paratus* ;
He was once, it was said, in the army as sutler,
And afterwards served as a gentleman's butler ;
So that none in the Parish, or elsewhere was found
So well posted up in a Fair or a pound ;
His daughter was with him, St. Kitty's Soprano,
With a face like an owl, and her voice a volcano !
And there was that silly young Puss in his boots,
The *butt* of the Parish, Mephibosheth Shoots ;
But Shoots was a Kat of considerable mettle,
At least in the bank, and could easily settle
The largest account in the Church's necess'ty ;
The wonder is only he was not in the vestry !
And with him there came the financial measurer,
Mephistophelis Spoots, first Warden and Treasurer,
Who stood very high in the world's estimation,
As a very sharp Kat in a stock speculation ;

St. Kattarine's Spire.

He could handle a loan with a better momentum
Than any Kat out, and at higher per centum ;
He was first at the board, and as matter of course,
Was always the last Kitten left on the bourse ;
No Kat was more trustworthy, none could be surer,
And none of the Saints of St. Kitt looked demurer :
And Japheth was there, that good mouser and true,
He was there to look on, and to aid in the stew
By friendly advice, and by counsel and reason—
A word here and there, like a chestnut in season ;
While Judith, his spouse, in her pride and her glory,
Was frisking around like the cat in the story—
O pussy cat, pussy cat, where have you been ?
I've been to great London to look at the Queen ;
O pussy cat, pussy cat, what did you there ?
I frightened a little mouse under the chair !
Her jacket was doffed, but she wore in its place
A very long thing no male Kat would disgrace,
For it trailed on the floor as she circled the room,
And swept up the scraps like a very new broom,

St. Kattarine's Spire.

Which drew from Macalpin the ominous wail,
Our Kat, my dear Pastor, has got a long tail !
And the first Warden's Tabby, that dear little dumpling,
Was there to assist, and to keep things from rumpling ;
And the wall-flower Tabbys were there in their prime,
Outdoing the beavers in tilts against time !
And as for the Kittens, those beautiful creatures,
How *shall* I describe them by names or by features !
For there was Miss Consort, Miss Choose and Miss Place,
And the darling Miss Doubt with her sister Miss Grace ;
Miss Judgment, Miss Statement, Miss Conduct, Miss Like,
Miss Guidance, Miss Givings, Miss Happen, Miss Strike,
And all the young Misses from Miss Govern's school,
With their mentor and monitor, pretty Miss Rule ;
All these and a host more of other sweet faces,
With a few from Timbuctoo, and other queer places,
With blue eyes, and black eyes, and red eyes and brown,
And sweet little noses turned up and turned down—
With such cunning mouths, the abodes of the blisses,
With the sign on the outside—*open for kisses !*

St. Kattarine's Spire.

Then as for the Kittens in jackets and trousers,
Macalpin declared, with a wink, they were rousers !
They dawdled, and dribbled, and found recreation
In threading the needles and like occupation,
For the very *young* Kittens, the feminine few—
Pretended they never could such a thing do !
And there were the students, and young Kats of parts,
The Masters of music and other fine arts !
And Dildrum and Doldrum, physicians of note,
Well skilled in complaints of the stomach and throat ;
And lawyer Gamaliel, a Kat of perfumes,
Contracted in practising long in the Tombs,
With his hobbies, *replev'in* and *habeas corpus*,
To which he had mounted from being a store-Puss ;
And five or six Kats without orders, beside
A Prelate or two from the Canada side ;
And a Dean from old England, a Yorkshire Kat,
Who wore, as was proper, the real Oxford hat :
And as for the Devil, who followed the crowd,
Or led, as you please, he was there as allowed,

St. Kattarine's Spire.

Or by force of his will, it matters not which—
He was there with his horns, and his hoofs, and his pitch ;
So that taken together, as you may surmise,
This last Sewing Circle beat all for its size,
And all other circles, encircled in one,
Couldn't show as much work as at *this* one was done ;
But as *all* work and no *play* makes Jack a dull boy—
The proverb tho' musty I beg to employ—
So on this occasion the saying proved true,
And the managing mouser cried, stop, that will do
For the present, because I have something below
Will strengthen your stomachs, and please you, I know—
And scarce had she uttered the words—very well,
When lo, there was heard the sweet sound of a bell !

There's nothing more certain in coming around
Than hunger and thirsting, and sweet is the sound
Of the voice that says supper is ready my dear,
Except 'tis the voice that says supper is here ;

St. Kattarine's Spire.

For some men there are when their stomachs are craving
For mutton or muffins will nearly go raving,
And mutton and muffins their hunger appeasing,
Is oil to the axle that sadly wants greasing ;
The thunder and lightning that starving was breeding,
Dissolve in the sunshine of moderate feeding ;
Hence sweet are the voices that witchingly swell
In the musical sounds of the sweet supper bell !
You may talk of the sleigh-bells that merrily mingle
With feminine voices in exquisite jingle ;
And oft of the bridal bells joyous and free,
That speak of the happiness still yet to be ;
You may sing with delight of the musical chimes
That ring out the advent of glad Christmas times ;
And so of those bells of the sweet mountain ringers,
Whose melody long in the memory lingers ;
Not these in their harmony, single or whole,
Bring joy like *this* bell to the famishing soul !
Then long may the supper bell ring in our ears,
Yes ring till the day of millenium appears,

St. Kattarine's Spire.

When ev'ry poor soul will enjoy his own rest,
And sit down to suppers the choicest and best !

Digressing again ! Then what will you cry,
Should another digression confront you by 'n by !

The rush that was made from the room was tremendous,
And the sounds that were uttered were simply stupendous !
Grimalkins and Tabbys were mixed in such maze,
That one less excited would certainly craze ;
Stay not on the order of going, you dunce,
Cried Sandy to Shoots, but go it at once !
So down to the basement they tumbled pell-mell,
As if for a region I care not to tell !
There were prelates, and punsters, and masters of arts,
And Kats of all ages, all sexes, all parts,
Mixed up in such muddle, such medley, such mess,
That many a Kitten lost half of her dress !

St. Kattarine's Spire.

So swift had the famishing party departed,
In less than a minute the room was deserted—
The managing Kat having taken the lead,
Being first at the table the Kittens to feed ;
While Japheth, the master, with mildest of wail,
Having waited for manners, came in at the tail ;
Whereas for the Devil, in race first to win,
By a way of his own, had already got in,
And there he was posted alone in the corner,
Quite sick at the stomach, and playing the scorner !

The table was spread with the choicest and best
That the market afforded, some raw, and some drest ;
There were muffins and mutton, of course, and a hash,
And dough-nuts and crullers, and very fine mash
Of a curious nature that Judith had made,
As she whispered to Sandy, all out of her head
And the tail of an ox ! There was soup, too, and tripe,
And a chowder of catfish, and one or two snipe ;

St. Kattarine's Spire.

For drink there was ginger and other small beer,
And something or other that smelt very queer ;
And as for the fluid that steamed from the urn,
Said Sandy, you better believe it would burn !
The principal object that rose to the view,
As you entered the pot of this nice little stew,
Was the managing mouser herself in a chair
That lifted her mug sev'ral feet in the air ;
She was grandly imposing, and playing the dummy,
Reminded the guests of a galvanized mummy !
Said Sandy Macalpin to simpleton Shoots,
Go in, my Mephibosheth, go in, Puss in boots !
And go in he did, with a rush and a scramble,
And round the long table did gracefully amble,
Now seizing a plate, now a spoon, now a knife,
As if he were bent on destruction of life !
I thought I should split, said the wag to the Pastor,
And kept my eye on him for fear of disaster !

St. Kattarine's Spire.

But the Kats and the Kittens, the red, brown, and white,
Having gobbled up solids enough for the night,
And guzzled the fluids, were wiping their jaws,
And slicking their heads and their tails with their paws,
As a prelude for quitting, when sounds above stairs
Made them prick up their ears ! 'twas that sweetest of airs,
The burden of which is, *mamma* when I'm dead,
O lay me, do please, in my dear little bed !
Of course a commotion ensued, and a race
By each Kat and Kitten to get the best place ;
Why even the Dean, yes that grave *Dominatorum*,
Was seen, for the nonce, to forget his decorum,
And clapping the Oxford hat squat on his pate,
Rushed out with the others, with phrenzy elate ;
While Sandy Macalpin, the mischievous elf,
Ascending the stairs in the wake of the throng
That was rushing so madly in search of the song,
Cried, Dean, you old dog, you know how 'tis yourself !
And nudging the Japheth behind, very sly,
Exclaimed, my dear Pastor, O how's *this* for high !

St. Kattarine's Spire.

There is music, I sang, when the supper bell rings,
Enchanting the soul with the vision it brings ;
There is music sublime in a moderate breeze
When it warbles and sighs thro' the summer-clad trees ;
There is music to some in the steam-whistle's screech,
And music in billows that roll on the beach ;
There is music to others in braying of donkeys,
And music, sweet music, in chatt'ring of monkeys ;
But roll these together in one chorus grand,
So that nothing on earth can their power withstand—
Yes bind them together in silvery rings,
'Tis discord itself when the Soprano sings !
Pauline, the sweet rhymster, rolled up her green eyes,
And like a rapt Ogress in dreamy surprise,
Leered fondly around towards the big-whiskered Kat,
As though she would say, love, what think you of that !
While Sandy himself, as he measured each note,
Declared to the Dean, she'd a frog in her throat !
And when the sweet echos had reached their last claws,
The echos were drowned in a deaf'ning applause—

St. Kattarine's Spire.

Applause such as none but the feline persuasion
Can utter in concert on such an occasion !

Cried Sandy, the wag, who had once been to France,
I move now the meeting break up with a dance ;
I move our fair sister whose warblings can fill
Us with joy so complete, shall again grind her mill
To the tune of a waltz, or the festive quadrille :
To which the Soprano replied, with a grin,
That was meant for a smile, get out, and go in !
No sooner, said Sandy, 'tis said than 'tis done,
And out on the carpet with Judith he spun !
The blood of the mouser rushed wild thro' her veins,
And ev'ry old nerve having taken the reins,
A pleasant sensation she long since had known,
Became, for the time, again, once more her own !
O, sing to the waltz, then, ye bards of the earth,
That filleth our houses and halls with its mirth—

St. Kattarine's Spire.

With its elegant postures, its innocent ways—
O, who would not burst in its rapturous praise !
The steps Sandy took were remarkably curious,
And made all the Tom Kats exceedingly furious,
While those of his partner, a mouser so frail—
Excited disgust as she flung round her tail !
And Japheth the modest, the meekest of mousers,
Went fumbling around, in the crowd, for his trousers ;
But what did *she* care, she was bound on a bender,
And so she spun round just as Sandy would send her ;
Till at length, getting dizzy, she fell to the floor,
With Sandy upon her, half dead, if not more !
The excitement that followed, of course, was intense,
And held all the Kittens in howling suspense,
While Dildrum and Doldrum, as if to enhance it,
Each drew from his pocket a murderous lancet,
And dragging the seeming dead Kat to the hall,
Prepared to draw blood in a furious squall ;
While the managing mouser, dead fainted, or feigning,
Only uttered one wail of the feeblest complaining ;

St. Kattarine's Spire.

O, she looked like that antediluvian rabbit,
When Japheth the first made an effort to grab it—
Or like that same rabbit, when caught, caged, and humbled,
It lay in the Ark all bedrabbled and tumbled !
But the Devil looked on with a sickly grimace,
So befitting the person, the time, and the place,
And bending above her, he pleasantly smiled,
As he whispered, 'tis nothing, my own sweetest child !



ST. KATTARINE'S SPIRE.

PART THIRD.

WHEN cats we love, by Death's relentless hand,
Are borne away to that mysterious land
Where cats can frolic in their feline mirth
Without the fear of curs of human birth ;
When such, the victims of a fell disease,
That neither love nor catnip-tea could ease—
When such, I say, are laid upon the shelf—
The ghosts and shadows of their former self ;
We bow with resignation to the will,
That says to dying puss, shut up, be still !
But when the summons, with despotic speed,
Comes to the victim in full health and feed ;
When the stern mandate, with a sudden clap,
Like the swift postman's noisy, double-rap ;

St. Kattarine's Spire.

Or like the sudden slamming of a door,
That makes cat jump as cat ne'er jumped before ;
Or as when boys, with mischievous propense,
Hurl the sharp flint at pussy on the fence ;
Or when, with greater malice in their sport,
They seboy Tray till puss at last is caught—
Aghast we stand, and cry, alas for me,
That I should witness such catastrophe !
So 'twas, we read, when catapult was peeled
Against proud Troy where Helen was concealed—
Tower and turret came tottering down,
And discord spread thro' all the startled town !
And so it was when Judith was betrayed
Into unfeline ways, and lowly laid
Upon the hard stone floor, a victim sure
Of Dildrum's spit, or Doldrum's savage skewer !
For her nose was black, and her lips were blue,
And she looked otherwise as dead cats do,
Sprawling, and rumped, and smashed out of utter
Shape, as you've seen dead cats in the gutter !

St. Kattarine's Spire.

But the Doctors had lapsed from their bloody intent,
When they found that the Kittens expressed such dissent,
And feeling the sinking Kat's snoot and her side,
To the back of her stomach a poultice applied ;
For they said it was only a fit cataleptic—
A common occurrence with Kittens dyspeptic—
While the Dean, who had viewed from the Canada side,
The Lake, and the Falls, and the St. Lawrence tide,
Said he thought 'twas a cataract caught on the eaves,
Which nothing but tapping it ever relieves ;
Whereas that Macalpin, with punning retort,
Declared it was only catarrh she had caught !

So many things like these were done and said,
'Twas given out, at last, the Kat was really dead,
And Jocko—who was undertaker too—
Prepared at once to pay the honors due
To such a Kat, a catafalque had made,
On which the Judith might be nicely laid ;

St. Kattarine's Spire.

And Japheth had compiled a catalogue
Of all her virtues from the Decalogue,
And had designed to catechise the people
Upon the sin of putting up that steeple ;
But he, as well as other Kats forgot
That Judith had nine lives—what cat has not !
So she, resolving not to die this time,
Revived, and so revives again my halting rhyme.

The managing mouser thus having survived,
And the day of the Fair having safely arrived,
With ev'ry arrangement complete and in full,
The Committee of All were prepared for a pull—
A long pull, a strong pull, a pull all together,
The crumbs for the Steeple by bushels to gather ;
So the doors were thrown open precisely at one,
With the Kats on the watch as is usually done :
But I should have first mentioned what now you must
That the Fair was at Church in the cellar below ; [know,

St. Kattarine's Spire.

The very best place, as the Judith had said,
With the furnace at hand and the flume overhead ;
And this I observe, as a fact very striking,
Was really the place to the Devil's own liking ;
For ev'ry one knows how he's famed for refining,
And all the world over a devil for mining !
But ere my Muse carries the story too far,
I would add that the Fair had been dubbed a Bazar,
A name which the Kittens in one of their flights,
Had fished with a line from the Church on the Heights

O, where can the eye of a mortal discover,
With sharpest of sight, if he roam the world over—
O, where in the world can such wonder be found,
As a Ritual Fair in a church underground !
From ceiling to floor, by the Judith designed,
The flags of all nations were gracefully twined,
As an emblem, no doubt, of her catholic spirit,
That stopped not at creeds, nor at cash, nor at merit :

St. Kattarine's Spire.

And piled on the tables, as high as your head,
Those choice little tit-bits were temptingly spread,
While dangling from cat-gut in ev'ry department,
Of Kat's wear, and other ware, quite an assortment ;
And there from their cloisters so modestly peeping,
Each dear little Pussy her vigils sat keeping ;—
In one single sentence, from centre to border,
Ev'rything at the Fair was in apple-pie order ;
So to make it a perfect success for the Steeple,
There only was needed a great throng of people ;
And the people thronged in, by their dozens and threes,
As smiling as Punches, and lively as fleas,
So that just by the time that most mousers sup,
While Jocko, the Sexton was lighting it up,
The room was so crowded with Kittens and Kats,
Said Sandy to Judith, old Puss, you'll get rats !
But the Devil was there, as a matter of course,
To look after matters, should matters get worse—
He was there as a Kat from a rich rural district,
Dressed up to kill, a la ritualistic,

St. Kattarine's Spire.

With lots of soft sodder, and plenty of tin,
The attention and love of the Kittens to win !
The proverb says truly, that birds of a feather—
To wit, money-changers, gregariously gather ;
And so it proved true at this meeting of fleas,
For the Devil and Spoots grew as thick as two peas,
Which stirred up Shoots' bile, and so shattered his morals,
That he and the Warden had one or two quarrels ;
Shoots thought of the money he lent Spoots on call,
And he'd have it all back, or pin Spoots to the wall !

It was soon whispered round that the elegant stranger
Was Lucifer Match, the great female deranger,
And Judith to Sandy remarked she was told,
That his pockets were deep, and were lined with pure gold ;
And this getting wind, all the Kittens to please him,
Exerted their best of his money to ease him ;
Mr. Match, if you please, take a chance in this mat,
It was made by Miss Pauline, our poetic Kat,

St. Kattarine's Spire.

You will find it quite handy to have in the house,
'Tis as soft to the touch as the skin of a mouse ;
And here, cried another, 's a cushion, do please
Take a chance, you will find it so nice for the knees
When you pray ! And here, cried a third, is a rug
To lay by the fire, what *could* be so snug !
And as Lucifer thought of the coals in his oven,
He blushed to the horns, and hid his hoof cloven ;
But he brazened it out with the usual smirk,
Till he felt at his tail an uncommon smart jerk ;
O ho ! my fine fellow, he cried, as he turned,
And saw 'twas the Baker, the priv'lege you've earned,
Just leave us alone for a minute or two,
And I'll have a chat by the furnace with you !
So the Prophet returned to his place by the fire,
To see how his baking got on for the Spire,
And to wait for his chum like a sensible Kat,
While he warmed himself up for a sociable chat !
Mr. Match, Mr. Match, cried a Puss, with a mew, Sir,
There's a note in the Post Office waiting for you, Sir !

St. Kattarine's Spire.

And then a tall Kitt, with a green-goggled nose,
Made a dip as she handed the stranger a rose ;
So flustered was Pauline at what she had done,
That she flew to the Temple of Flora alone,
Where she coughed, and she sneezed in a glow of surprise,
As she thought of the Poem she had penned to those eyes,
Now lying perdu in the Post Office lair,
Till Lucifer's footsteps should carry him there !

'Twas remarked that the stranger avoided the Pastor,
As a dog that's been whipped is afraid of his master ;
But he courted the Judith, and made matters square,
By a present he'd drawn of a beautiful chair,
While she to express what she felt in her crupper,
Invited the stranger to join her at supper ;
She remembered she'd read it, how oft unawares
We may entertain angels by putting on airs,
So the managng mouser unburdened her soul
To the beautiful Kat in the ritual role ;

St. Kattarine's Spire.

She told how she suffered, and bore it so brave,
That Japheth at home like a madman would rave,
That all she could do to have love, peace and quiet,
Resulted each day in a family riot ;
Her cross was so heavy, she sometimes declared
She would go to the devil, for nobody cared !
And then, while a flood of tears gushed from her eyes,
She fell on the stranger, and poured forth her cries !
While the Devil who didn't like so to be caught,
Slipped out of her arms to some other resort !
And the sweet little Kittens that handed the tea,
And the muffins and mutton, so pleasant to see,
Dropped muffins and mutton, and flew with a wail,
Supposing that some one had trod on a tail !
But the Judith had rallied, and taking her chair,
Said, thank you my darlings, I only want air !

So the ev'ning sped on, there was laughter and chat,
And such other sounds as proceed from a Kat ;

St. Kattarine's Spire.

It was nuts to the managing mouser to see,
As she grinned at the Kats that came flocking to tea,
How the money was flowing in streams to her till,
While the Kittens were stuffing themselves to the fill !
The crowd was tremendous, and those Kats with corns,
Beat the Devil to pieces in scowlings and scorns ;
But the Devil had wormed himself safe to the well,
Where Rebecca was seated well-water to sell ;
Yes, Rebecca was there, the good Baker's good daughter,
In her Eastern costume to deal out the well-water ;
With those globular eyes, and those ears, in the gloam,
She looked like an owl from the ruins of Rome !
The water was good, but the lemons were frail,
So he paid his ten cents with a squirm of his tail,
And catching the eye of Pauline in her bower,
He squirmed thro' the crowd, and presented the flower !
O love ! what an imp of a devil thou art,
That playeth such pranks with the feminine heart,
That buildeth such castles, and then with a slash
Of thy scorpion cut-stick sends all things to smash !

St. Kattarine's Spire.

So Pauline discovered before the Fair ended,
And so did the Devil before he intended !

There were some things the Devil liked more than another,
In wand'ring around the Bazar with his brother ;
He saw the Kats raffling for crosses and crowns,
For Madonnas and Josephs, and nunnery gowns—
An asylum for Judith, for Japheth a manse,
In each one of which he, of course, took a chance :
He wouldn't, however, consent to be weighed,
For of avoirdupois he was ever afraid ;
He felt, and he said it to Spoots without canting,
If weighed in the scales he'd be found to be wanting ;
But he liked the big pool where the Kitts fished in sport,
For he knew he could catch the best fish ever caught ;
He had always been noted for luck in that line,
As Spoots knew himself, and he said so, in fine ;
The fish he had hooked with his manifold bait,
Would have broken the heart of old Walton the great !

St. Kattarine's Spire.

And he liked the department of comfits and sweets,
It reminded him so of his saccharine feats—
How he sugared the loathsomest objects so well,
That no one on earth could the article tell—
How he covered all sins with a garment so fair,
And so nice-fitting too, 'twas a pleasure to wear !
How the most monstrous vice of the day, at his will,
Became a great virtue, a sweet sugar-pill !
How the souls he had gained thro' this sugary process,
Were those vaunted high by the world in its progress—
How those in high places who murdered and stole,
Were the souls that had swallowed his sugar-plums whole !

But where all this time was the sociable Pastor,
With his words of good cheer, and his politic plaster ?
He had long ago left on the Judith's dismissal,
Why was he not back, by the same kind permission ?
He was searching the house for a morsel to eat,
For his long weary tramp made him long for some meat ;

St. Kattarine's Spire.

He had been to the sick, and the dying in pain,
To the poor and the wretched in ev'ry dark lane,
He had been to the friendless, yea even the bad,
Whereever, in fact, he could make a heart glad ;
So down to the cellar he creepeth by stealth,
To pick up some scraps for the sake of his health—
Alas for his health, and alas for his daring,
He only could find there a single salt herring ;
There was nothing to eat in his cupboard so bare,
It all had been sent, with the cook, to the Fair !
So taking his hat, and his cloak, and his baton,
The Pastor set out for his muffins and mutton !
The Sexton was keeping good watch at the door,
And taking the change to admit to the floor ;
So Japheth drew out of his pocket a quarter,
And passed in at once, with a smile to the Porter.

You may search in your travels, however so far—
You may go, if you please, to your Eastern Bazar,

St. Kattarine's Spire.

Made famous in wondrous Arabian story,
By Sultan, and Caliph, and Aladin glory—
By Bashaw, and Pasha, and Kats o' nine tails,
Before whose effulgence the Western Kat pales,
Where the fumes of tobacco are blended with stench
Of Mussulman Kennel and Mussulman wench :—
Not all these effusions combined can compare
With the horrible stench of an underground Fair !
Imagine the place with its mephitic damp,
The mould, and the mash, and the kerosene lamps—
The fumes from the furnace, the flavor of mutton,
And eggs and butt-enders, all more or less rotten—
And added to these add the smell of the rats,
And the various odors exhaled from the Kats,
And I think you will have a conception of taints
From this underground Fair of the St. Kitten Saints ;
Especially so when you bear it in mind,
That the crowd was a jam of a very mixed kind !
Said Sandy to Japheth, while mousing around,
In a sad way for him, with his nose to the ground,

St. Kattarine's Spire.

Through that jelly of Kats, with a wink of his eye,
My very dear Pastor, O how's *this* for high !
But Japheth was patient, and loved his dear people,
Contented to bear even *this* for the Steeple ;
So he wandered about in a maze of delight,
And over the Bedlam dispersed his warm light ;
He stopped at each table, and smiled at the Kitts,
And bought a few dickies, and doilies and mits ;
He was placid and hopeful, and played his good part,
With his head in the clouds, and the Church in his heart !
Of course he was hungry, but what need he care,
There was plenty to eat and to drink at the Fair ;
So the managing Kat, in the height of her ardor,
Spread out to his gaze the contents of his larder !
This didn't disturb him at all, the good Pastor,
He was only encouraged to wag his jaws faster,
For he knew he was paying quadruple the cost
Of the muffins and mutton his larder had lost !

St. Kattarine's Spire.

Erasmus the Greek, having puzzled his scholars,
On the shape and the size of pre-Adamite dollars,
And the wonderful way in which Solomon shingled
The roof of the Temple, all jumbled and mingled,
Began then to feel, as indeed he well might,
The searching demands of a Kat's appetite ;
So looking around in the gloam for a place,
He spied the good Pastor just wiping his face,
And squatting himself quite at ease by his side,
To the mutton and muffins his grinders applied ;
Erasmus the Greek, altho' partial to feeding,
Had been brought up a Kat of the very best breeding,
So when he had swallowed his sixth cup of tea,
And mutton and muffins, of course, to agree,
He began to believe he was getting enough,
At least, as he said, of such horrible stuff !
So rising to go from his seat, as is wont,
He stumbled and fell to the floor with a grunt,
While the dear little Kittens, the Pastor and all
Who had seen the learned Greek so deplorably fall,

St. Kattarine's Spire.

With the Prelates and Dean, who had called for a stew,
And the students with nothing much better to do,
Quick raised the fat Kat, who was growing obtuse,
To Judith's new chair, his complaint to reduce !
Now an overstuffed Kat is an object of grief,
And by all means should have some immediate relief ;
So seeing the Greek in a state so lethargic,
The Doctors prescribed him a gentle cathartic,
And, softly unbinding the band of his blouse,
Despatched him at once on a board to his house—
While Jocko, the Sexton, in view of a job,
Rammed all the loose change like a wad in his fob !

Thus the ev'ning wore on midst the noises and jars,
Just the same as it does in all other Bazars ;
There were grab-bags for Kitts, and young choir-Kats
Of fifteen and sixteen were wrestling for rats,
While others were racing like mad thro' the hall,
Or shying great chunks of hot bread at the wall,

St. Kattarine's Spire.

So that Nathan the Prophet, with phrensy well fired,
Flew out at the rascals like Balaam inspired,
And catching an innocent Puss by the throat,
Shook hair from his jacket, and tore his own coat !
Which so pleased the Devil, who, passing that way
To the Gall'ry of Arts, had beheld the affray,
That he gave the good Baker a nod for the dressing,
And curled up his tail by the way of a blessing ;
While the young choir-Kittens so brisk, and so gay,
Crept under the curtain to join in the play !
The play was the play, as announced by the Prophet
Who stood at the entrance—The Sirens in Tophet,
Or the Devil played out—by the St. Kitten's choir
In character costume, by Judith's desire—
First Soprano as Siren, the Second the same,
Contraltos Charybdis and Scylla in flame ;
While Tenor the first as a Tantalus growled,
And Tenor the second as Cerberus howled ;
The Basses took Chaos and Beelzebub's Taurus,
And the Imps were performed by the choir-Kitt chorus.

St. Kattarine's Spire.

The Gall'ry was thronged with the cream of the Parish,
The amateur grave and the amateur garish—
Gamaliel, the mouser of family urns,
Being there as first fiddler, and prompter, by turns ;
While Dildrum and Doldrum played shifters of scenes,
And Pauline, as Flora, made bunches of greens,
With which in her zeal as a poetic flunkey,
She purposed to favor each stultified donkey
Who ranting around, by a fortunate hit,
Should bring down the house from the dome to the pit,
Where the Devil, still acting the part of a Kat,
With his friend Mephistophelis quietly sat—
The Prophet and Judith having taken a chair,
In a line with the twain, a short space in the rear—
While Sandy Macalpin held Shoots by the paw,
In a very tight place, on a stool near the door ;
For Shoots was as mad as the maddest March hare,
And swore Mephistophelis coat he would tear ;
He'd make him give back all that money on call,
Or one or the other, by jingo, should fall !

St. Kattarine's Spire.

So the first Warden's spouse, and good Japheth the Pastor,
Were left in the cold to avoid a disaster.

If matches are made in the good place above,
Why is it so often they're made without love !
Was not the good Japheth a better than Spoots,
Then why was not he in the good Japheth's boots,
And why was not Japheth in those of his brother,
Thus changing their places the one with the other !
The question has puzzled my head 'till it's sore,
And so it shan't puzzle my head any more.

But disasters will happen, sometimes at a Fair,
Though managed and planned with the greatest of care,
And sometimes beside in a way least expected,
From a source above all that was never suspected ;
It appears that when Jocko returned from the Greek's,
He observed in the flume one or two little leaks,

St. Kattarine's Spire.

And like a good monkey, as sly and as swift,
He climbed to the flume, and made wider the rift !
The scene that ensued baffles poetic diction,
And seems in review but a horrible fiction !
You have been out perhaps in a September shower—
You have seen the lead fall from the highest shot-tower—
You know how the Biddys when finished the wash,
From six-story windows let suds tumble swash—
You have heard, if not read, of a nasty Scotch mist,
Where the houses tho' high have a southerly list—
Why these are but snaps of the finger at air,
To the burst of a flume in an underground Fair !
The stench of the place had been something before,
But the sewer discharging inspired with awe !
As the black stream of filth spirted out with a gush,
The Kats and the Kittens for life made a rush ;
No time for Kats wear, or any ware rather—
Not even the stamps, in the hurry, to gather ;
The shrieks and the cries from the Kats and the Kitts,
Said Sandy Macalpin, gave ev'ry Kat fits !

St. Kattarine's Spire.

But Japheth the good, and the first Warden's spouse,
So collected and cool in that terrible souse—
Remained till each Kitten was safely preserved,
And Nathan was pickled the way he deserved !
For when at late hour a plumber was found,
In sounding the swash he was hauled up dead drowned !
The crowd in its exit had settled his hash,
And stamped out his wits in that horrible mash !
He was flat as a pancake, flatter than that,
In short he was what you would call a dead Kat ;
His cake was all dough, to the shades he had passed,
Nunquam non paratus had caught him at last !



ST. KATTARINE'S SPIRE.

PART FOURTH.

ONCE more my Muse takes measure sad,
That erst in sportive vein sang glad—
Sang of the supper-bell in glee,
And praised Soprano's minstrelsy !
Of these no more my Muse may sing,
For now she hears the church-bell ring ;
The church-bell rings in saddened tone,
And makes a slow and mournful moan—
The church-bell tolls with muffled note,
Like quinsied Kat with flannelled throat—
That bell is tolling for the dead,
And ev'ry Kitten hangs her head—

St. Kattarine's Spire.

What are church spires ! what church Fair !
When mourning mousers rend the air !
What are your Puseyite desires,
When such great grief each Kat inspires,
What are your ritualistic ways,
When dead Kats live Kats nearly craze !
The cortege moveth sad and slow
Along the street, mid signs of woe ;
The dandy Kitts that line the walk,
Forget their leers and shallow talk ;
Instead of staring at young mousers,
They fumble sadly in their trousers—
The pageant passeth in the door,
With solemn tramp, inspiring awe,
The pageant passeth up the aisle,
And moan on moan to mountains pile !
Clad in their vestments all so white,
The clergy lead, imposing sight !
And following in the sad procession,
The choir-Kitts chant the introgression :—

St. Kattarine's Spire

There never flowed such tide of grief,
As flowed that day for Kats' relief;
St. Katt'rine's church was one great howl,
As when cats moan at midnight foul !
St. Katt'rine shook from dome to floor,
With one tremendous Kitten roar !
Which blending with the organ's tone,
Would almost melt a heart of stone ;
While high above the muffled chime,
In sad accord, kept saddest time !
St. Kitts ne'er heard such sounds unfold
As those which now were sadly trolled—
St. Kitten never felt such shock
As that which made the old church rock !

Blow let the wind o'er chimney top—
Blow till you cry when will it stop ;
Blow let the wind from East to West—
Blow till you cry it blows I'm blest :

St. Kattarine's Spire.

Blow let the wind from South to North—
Blow till it blows like—and so forth ,
Blow let the wind on darkest night—
Blow till each cat is dead with fright ;
Blow in the churchyard, blow in the grave,
Blow till cats' hide you cannot save ;
Blow till it blows each cat to rest,
Blow till it blows its very best ;
Blow till it blows each blower up—
Blow till it blows the winning cup ;
Blow till it blows like great guns in the front,
Blow till you cry you'll be blowed if it don't !
Blow all these big blows into one blower vast,
Blow not such big blow as this last bitter blast !

Then let my Muse in plaintive measure,
Absolved from every foolish pleasure,
Resolve to close her tender ears
To ev'rything but sobs and tears ;

St. Kattarine's Spire.

Or let her else in sorrow sink
To deepest depths of blackest ink ;
O, let her blow her noisy horn,
To ev'rything that's most forlorn ;
Or let her close her windy chap,
Take down her sign, and shut up shop !
But no, she has not reached the end,
Her Kats' tale still deserves a friend—
A friend in now her hour of need,
As proverb says, a friend indeed ;
Then wake, my Muse, and stir your stumps !
Awake, and spring to higher jumps !
Awake, and raise your sinking head !
Awake, and sing of two Kats dead !

Dead as the herring that Japheth had found,
Dead as the rats in the mash underground ;
Dead as the mutton that Jocko had filched,
Dead as the play so remarkably squelched ;

St. Kattarine's Spire.

Dead as the lights of the kerosene lamps,
Dead as the stench of those mephitic damps ;
Dead as the love that the Poetess crazed,
Dead as the loan that Mephibosheth dazed ;
Dead as the fire the Baker had fed,
Dead as the Baker himself and his bread ;
Dead as the churches the Greek had described,
Dead as the tongue that his scholars had bribed ;
Dead as his wit to bewilder one more Puss,
Dead in that fit of the *cholera morbus* !
Dead as a door-nail, dead as a nit,
Dead as the deadeat of dead Kat or Kitt !

'Twas a beautiful Sabbath, those rarest of days
That shine out to cheer us with midsummer rays,
While the trees of the city are withered and bare,
And icicles hang in the December air—
Like the smile of a babe in its grandmother's arms,
When the firemen rush with their dreadful alarms !

St. Kattarine's Spire.

There'd been snow in the night, but the walk had been
By Jocko, the Sexton, while yet the Kats slept ; [swept
But the lily-white element covered the tin
Of the roof, symbolizing the doings within ;
While a few little drops trickling down from the creepers,
Had spattered the tails of a few of the weepers.

Good Jocko, the Sexton, with monkey-like whine,
Having come to the chancel, at head of the line,
The caskets were placed where the caskets should go,
Half-buried in flowers as white as the snow,
Which Pauline had gathered by hook and by crook,
To give to the pageant a less dismal look ;
While the pall-bearers sniffing a moment or two,
Were crammed by the Sexton in chief-mourners' pew.

'Twas a sight to behold at St. Kitten's that day—
Such a blending of colors, the grave with the gay ;

St. Kattarine's Spire.

The mourners themselves, it need hardly be said,
Could hardly be told, by their looks, from the dead ;
While, scattered around in luxurious pews,
The bonnets and bloomers shone bright with all hues ;
And bending and bowing in odd genuflexions,
With camel-like humps, and their sister connexions—
With doubled-up postures, and ritual airs, [prayers !
You would think they were daddy-long-legs at their
In the chancel the candles were burning so bright,
That the choir-Kitts blinked on the left and the right,
As they joined with the organ, in good time and tone,
And the choir up stairs, like twelve dogs at one bone !
While the Dean and high Prelates with very long faces,
At request of the Vestry, had taken their places
To aid in the service, where Japheth the good,
In the strength of his love like a stone-tower stood,—
Like a wide-spreading olive tree flourishing fair,
While the forest around it is rotten and bare !
But for one single weakness, that pliable nature, [creature;
The world would have known, at the least, one new

St. Kattarine's Spire.

His smile was reproof to all sin, and those eyes
Seemed swimming away to their home in the skies !
While the Dean turns his back to the pews with a bow
To the beautiful Saint in the frame, like a cow—
Like the ritual cow with the great crumpled horn,
To the Maid that had milked her so very forlorn.

The Judith was there, and the Pauline, of course,
And Spoots the first Warden, the Kat of the bourse ;
And the lawyer Gamaliel, that mouser of urns,
And Dildrum and Doldrum, good Doctors, by turns,
And real honest churchmen, whichever you will—
And the first Warden's Tabby, so quiet and still ;
And Shoots too was there, with a look in his eyes
That kept Sandy by him for fear of surprise ;
For Shoots was still mutt'ring a murderous howl,
As he glared at the Spoots with a terrible scowl,
And a doubled-up paw, and a grinding of teeth,
And a shuffling about of his toes underneath !

St. Kattarine's Spire.

Such feelings are wicked, at least on a Sunday
At church, and they ought to be put off till Monday.

The Devil was there as the devil incog,
And flitting around, a true ritual prog,
Exerting himself to the best of his power,
To cheat and bamboozle, and eke to devour ;
He whispered in ears, and disturbed the devotions,
As always he does with his ritual notions—
He urged all the Kats to respond very loud,
And tempted the gay, and the rich, and the proud,
And the lovers of pleasure, the vain, the false-hearted,
The selfish, and they from whom shame had departed ;
The harsh, and the cruel, and they who had closed
Their ears to the trumpet, and quietly dozed,
Or mumbled their prayers to their idols of wood,
And of stone, and of brass, in their sleepest mood !
Thus flitting around, like a bird in a fog,
The Devil kept moving, a mischievous prog !

St. Kattarine's Spire.

He went to the lawyer Gamaliel, and sat
By his side, tho' unseen, as Kat might with Kat ;
For Gamaliel was thinking of probates and chances,
Of breaking the Will of the Greek, and those manses
The Baker had left, and he snuffed from afar
The incense that rose from the family jar ;
So the Devil he whispered a *habeas corpus*,
And flitted away from the side of the law-Puss—
While the lawyer came back to his book up to time,
With the loudest *Ah-main* in the ritual rhyme !
Then he blew his hot breath in the ear of the Spoots,
And stirred up the bile of the victimized Shoots ;
And he went to Pauline, and he muddled her prayer
With the sonnet she'd penned to those eyes at the Fair !
She was building a castle or two very high,
In fact you might say very near to the sky,
To which she expected quite soon to be wafted,
On the wings of the sonnet you know she had drafted !
Then he went to the Judith and told of her talks,
And the merit she'd gained by her excellent works ;

St. Kattarine's Spire.

But the managing Kat was adrift in her mind,
And shifted about in her prayers like the wind ;
She laughed, and she cried, and she twisted so spherical,
She was either dead sick, or a trifle hysterical ;
She rocked, like a hobby-horse, backward and forth,
And foamed at the mouth quite an ocean of froth ;
So the Devil forsook her, and went on his way,
To stir up more mischief on that lovely day ;
Yea, he dared e'en the chancel itself to profane
With his presence, and clouded the brain
Of the Dean and the Prelates, but turned on his hoof
At the *get thee behind me* of Japheth's reproof ;
And the first Warden's spouse, as she quietly knelt,
Sent him howling away, as if daggers he felt !
For the first Warden's spouse had a creed of her own,
Could be read at all times, in each look and each tone ;
There was nothing like sham or pretense in her talk,
And still less of sham or pretense in her walk ;
Her words and her actions were all so sincere,
That ev'ry Kat loved her sweet face, far and near ;

St. Kattarine's Spire.

Her own bitter cross was so cheerfully borne,
That none ever dreamed of a cross so forlorn ;
Her thoughts never wandered, except to the poor,
And to those who were knocking so faint at the door ;
No wonder the Devil went howling away
From the first Warden's spouse as she knelt down to pray.

Thus flitting around in that clear Sabbath light,
The Devil kept moving as well as he might—
From deceits of the world, from false doctrine and
From pride and vain glory, and pantheonism, [schism,
From envy and hatred, and all other evil,
From the crafts and assaults and the wiles of the Devil,
He heard with a sneer, and a laugh in the sleeve,
For he knew, to a dot, who were making believe !

But the prayers being over, the music all hushed,
And the mouthings and mumblings as silently quashed,

St. Kattarine's Spire.

A Prelate advanced to the low chancel rail,
The Kats in the caskets, so dead, to bewail :—
He spoke of the Baker's exemplary life,
How he fed with his muffins the poor, without strife,
Without envy, or pride, without *any great* sin—
How his bread was the largest that ever was seen—
How he left the false church for the true, in his zeal,
And brought to the task the best ritual meal—
In a word, he exclaimed, that his good was so various,
That the tenure of life is so very precarious,
It behooved ev'ry Kitten, or Kat, to a barn-Puss,
Like the Kat in that casket, to die in the harness !
And as for the Greek, what a loss to the church !
A Kat of such study and ancient research !
Why his learning was deeper than ever was written !
Could you wonder at all he so charmed ev'ry Kitten !
He moulded their hearts to the tune of the ages, [pages ;
While he kept their minds fresh with the more modern
How he taught self-denial, and practised it too,
With fastings and penance, you all of you knew !

St. Kattarine's Spire.

In a word, he so eulogized both to the skies,
That very few Kats in the Church had dry eyes ;
The chief-mourners sniffled far more than was best,
And the pall-bearers sniffled along with the rest ;
(While the Devil sat on down his hunkeys, at ease,
Between the two caskets, as cool as you please ;
And he smiled at the laudable efforts to plaster
The two dead Kats up, by the Canada Pastor !)

But scarce had he ended, when, lo, in the hush
That followed his words, there was heard such a rush,
And a wailing so loud, that all started in fear !
What *was* it was mizzling so swift to the bier
Of Erasmus the Greek ! Hark, that wailing again !
Sure those are the sounds of a Kat in great pain !
Clad in deepest of mourning, with eyes all afire,
The wailing Kat came, ev'ry jump being higher,
Till the casket she reached, then, fleet as the deer,
Or the cat of the mountain, she sprang on the bier !

St. Kattarine's Spire.

The flowers were scattered like chaff to the wind,
Or as when cat scratches for what she would find !
And seizing the Greek's ugly phiz by the snout,
Still howling tremendous, she lugged the Kat out !
Thou monster ! she cried amid wildest commotion,
That shut down at once on each Kitten's devotion—
Thou monster ! thou beast ! thou nasty old snorter !
Give me back, if you can, my own darling daughter !
Give her back, or I'll grind your old flesh to a powder,
And send the foul bits to the devil for chowder !

Thus howling, and tearing the carcase to bits,
The whole congregation went out of their wits ;
While the choir-Kitts always on hand for a spree,
Jumped up in their seats to see what they could see ;
And so did the dead Baker's daughter, the Owl,
Who sat in the chief-mourner's pew, with a howl,
For she reasoned right well that the Devil, in haste,
Had come for her sire to make into paste !

St. Kattarine's Spire

And so did Pauline, who had come down so soon
From her voyage to look at the man in the moon ;
Her flowers lay scattered in pitiless wrath,
Like the vision of love that but late crossed her path ;
She had swept all the cobwebs clean out of the sky,
And never again might she go up so high !
She would hate all Katkind, and, alone with her muse,
She would go on a mission far off to the Jews !
And so said the wall-flower Tabbys, a score
Of whom sat in free pews near the door ;
While the masculine mousers, turned black with despair,
Were pulling their whiskers and tearing their hair,
At a sight so astounding ! the pall-bearers, too,
Were puzzled to death to know what they should do ;
They stared at the casket, they stared at each other,
And mewed all in concert to add to the pother.

Give me back my child, give me back my dear daughter !
Still howled the mad Kat, quite as loud as she ought to ;

St. Kattarine's Spire.

'Tis my mother ! shrieked Shoots, as he strove to get free
From the grip of Macalpin, let me go, let me be !
Unhand me, I say, or the best friend I've got,
Like yon scarified Kat shall go swiftly to pot !
Like a shot from a shovel, or anything quick,
He flew, and came down, like a thousand of brick,
On the Spoots who was choking his mother to death,
In an effort to stop her mad cries with her breath !
What a scene for a painter, what sounds for a choir !
What noise and confusion ! what rage and what ire !
The phrensy had seized on the whole congregation,
And the sounds that ensued are beyond calculation !
When a tiger is loosed from his cage at the show,
All the beasts rage and roar in a phrensy to go !
There is wildness in that, there is terror intense,
And ev'ry one present grows stiff with suspense !
But a wild Kat in church, and a dead Kat in creases,
With a second wild Kat, beats the tiger to pieces !
His sister a gone'r, his mother becrazed !
What wonder Mephibosheth's senses were dazed !

St. Kattarine's Spire.

What wonder he tore himself so from Macalpin,
Himself a wild, raving, and raging Grimalkin !
What wonder his blood was at boiling heat now !
What wonder his actions reflected his vow !
What wonder he thought of that money on call—
And the threat he had made to pin Spoots to the wall !

If curses were Kittens, how thick should they fly
At the head of the mouser that creepeth so sly
Thro' the sweet garden paths where the mother-cats sleep,
And the innocent pussys are playing bo-peep,
Unconscious of evil at each pretty jump,
While the little dog watches their plays from the pump !
And the crickets and grasshoppers hopping about,
Are keeping sweet time to the catydid's shout !
Where catnip and catswort are scenting the air,
And giving sweet promise of ev'rything fair !
The curses that fall on the hindmost are light,
To the curses that such ugly Tom should affright !

St. Kattarine's Spire.

And O, if there be a dark corner below,
Where such wicked cats should most certainly go,
Let that be the place where vile Kats like the Greek,
Shall wander forever their mutton to seek !

Becrazed to the utmost, and foaming with rage,
Like the tiger that beateth the bars of his cage,
Shoots closed with the Broker, and hugged him so tight,
That he cried out for mercy, and shook with affright !
While the mother, now loosed from the Treasurer's grasp,
Fell down in the aisle with a groan and a gasp !
Poor Mephibosheth Shoots ! his cup now ran o'er,
And nothing was needed to goad him on more ;
The knife from his jacket flashed bright in the sun,
And went to the heart of that son of a gun !
He had his revenge ; as the blood spirted out,
He exclaimed to Macalpin, I'm too up a spout !
The blade that sends Spoots to his last ding, dong bell,
See here, for poor Shoots, will the same story tell !

St. Kattarine's Spire.

O Sandy, my lover—my truest—my best—
Go after—my sister—I go—to my—rest !

O sorrow on sorrow, from ritual squirts !
Shoots went for Spoots' mutton, Spoots got his deserts !
Is there not for poor Shoots, say, some nice sunny place
In the moon, where his crime, a long fast may efface !
For the one single stain on his handsome new boots,
Was the blood that he drew from *his* murderer Spoots !
Remember that Shoots was a half-witted Kat ;
Remember him faithful and trustful at that ;
Remember his sister dead gone to the world !
Remember his mother, demented, and hurled
To her end by that mean, crafty wretch,
That had spoiled *him* of all to the uttermost stretch !
Remember all this, and let pity's tear fall
For him who had pinned that vile Spoots to the wall !

St. Kattarine's Spire.

Both Dildrum and Doldrum were, of course, now on hand,
With plaster, and poultice, and stomach-ache band ;
While the Devil, well pleased at the horrible stew,
Fled away to his furnace fresh mischief to brew !
What made matters worse was that Judith had fainted
Dead down in her pew while these scenes I have painted
Were being enacted at such frightful speed !
Yes, dead in her pew in this hour of need !
Poor victim of folly and ritual craft,
She died in *her* harness, most thoroughly daft !

The drops from the eaves of the fast-melting snow
Fell down in great streams at such terrible woe !
While Jocko, the Sexton, so cunning and cruel,
Was burning up rats in the furnace for fuel !
And the stench and the smoke coming up thro' the flume,
The Kats all supposed that the Church would consume :
There was howling profound at the service processional,
But what was all that to the chorus recessional !

St. Kattarine's Spire.

St. Kitt's patron Saint was soon hid from the view,
As the darkness came down like a lid on the stew ;
And the Kats and the Kittens—the living ones yet—
Went out in a hurry, said Sandy, you bet !
While the wag still intent on his favorite joke,
Whimpered, Pastor, I told you 'twould all end in smoke !
And then, yes, and there, with a tear in his eye,
He sobbed out, *dear* Pastor, O how's *this* for high !



ST. KATTARINE'S SPIRE,

OR

THE DEVIL AT WORK

IN THE CHURCH.

A RITUALISTIC MELODY,

IN FOUR PARTS.

NEW YORK:

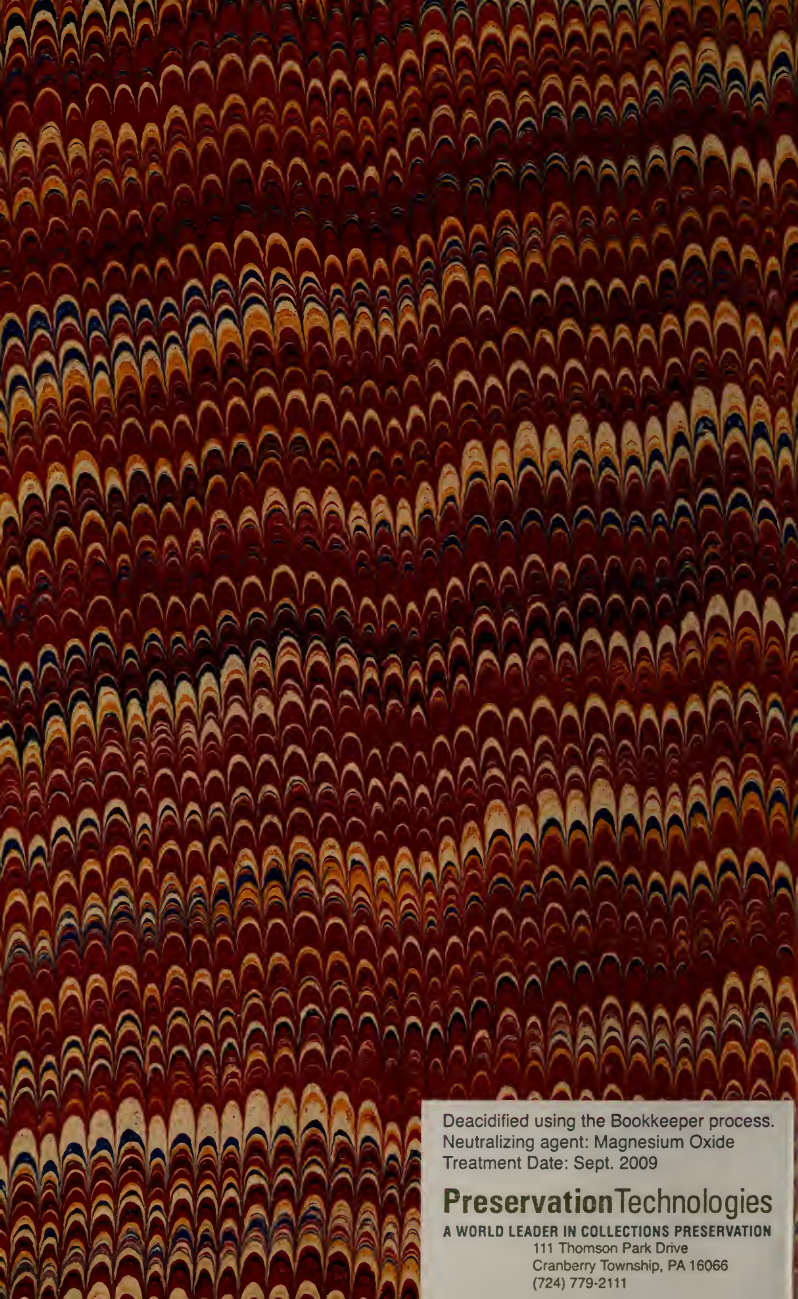
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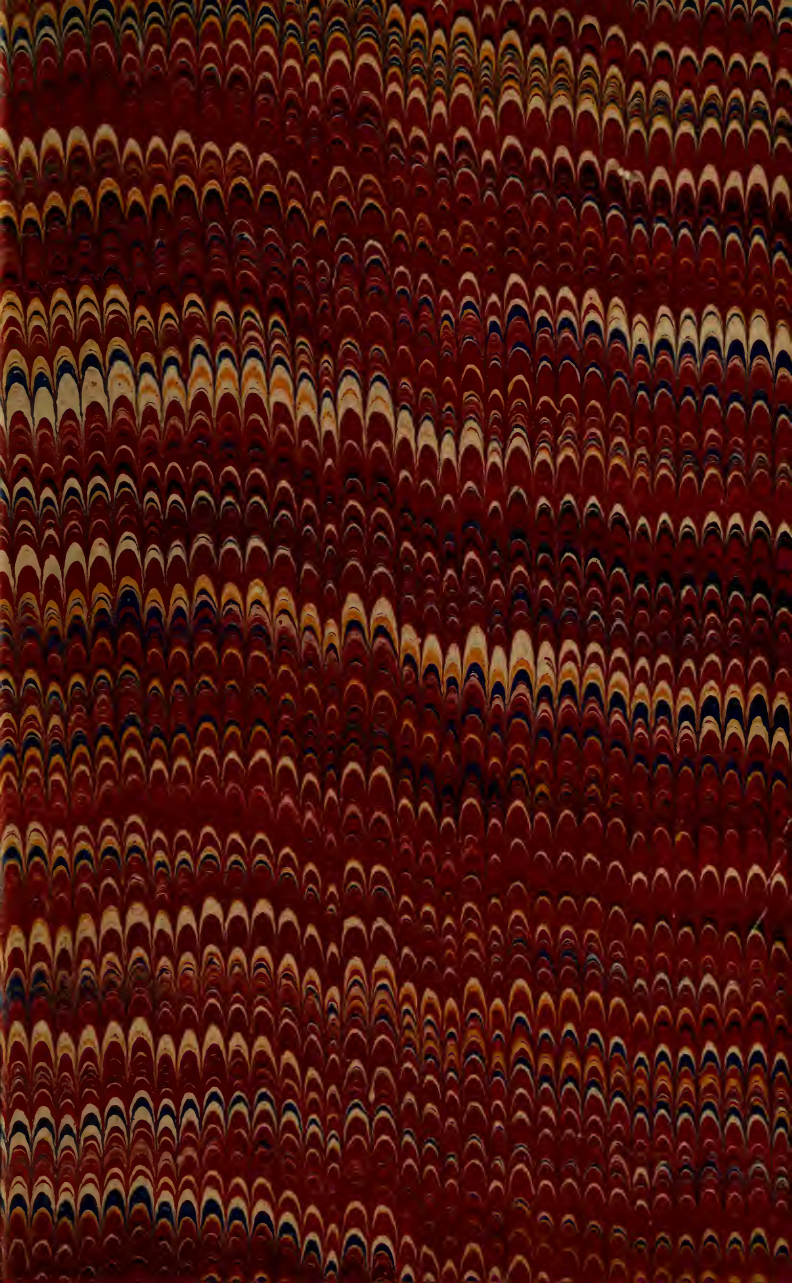


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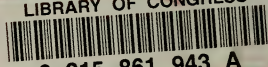
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